11 Nov 1917

Dearest

The boots were sent off: Julian's, cost £6 which seems absurd, but the others were old stock & his were new, so they cost more. Wouldn't you like a pair for your own feet? They are amazingly comfortable.

I went off the other night forgetting your pictures & my umbrella of course; but I shall go tomorrow if I can. I think you've very generous. My opinion of your art is so high that I suppose you think it worthless. Of course I only saw the show in half light the other day; but I got some quite strong feelings from it, good or bad. I think you exaggerate the lack of sensibility: you ca the worst of art is that it appeals solely to the aesthetic faculties, &

Oneis extremely shy & snobbish about giving away one's deficiency or eccentricity about them. Of course I committed myself all wrong to poor old Roger, about his cold hard little conventions & called them literary, what he said they aren't. I was a good deal impressed by Gentler. much more at this show than at the other.

NYPL

What a divine hour I had at Gordon Sq^re! I enjoyed it, like Saxon's brandy — the unreality, a bloom of the sensations went to my head, but of course if I'd stayed I should have run to ground. Was it great fun all through? I hope not.

The real point of this letter is to say that you owe me 11/— but I think you ought to deduct something for the port. Then we want to make a store for the drawing room. If you could give us any hints we should be grateful. We're buying 10 tiles & arranging them like yours, but I can't remember how the hood on top went.

I suppose you're living at Asheham today & to meet Faith. I'm sure she'll have our letters out.

I must now get ready to lunch with the Webbs. Do tell me

how your educational plans work out.
My feeling is that excessive masculinity
has to be guarded against; I mean
young men do seem to me so selfish &
assertive; which tends to my thinking
to be frightfully boring, data (but I want
so on, as I know you don't agree, &
also I've no time.) Anyhow. Julian's
a very attractive brat, & as full of
brains as an egg (this is really a compliment)

Yrs
B.

Barbara says that you're getting rid of him £. I rather thought you would. Let me know if I can be of use. I could easily go & see any of Mrs. Hunt's or Sheuthers.

Hogarth House

27 Nov 1917.

1912

Tuesday.

Dearest,

I'm sorry I haven't been able to go to the Bead Shop yet, but I will do my best to-morrow when I'm going to the dentist. I dreamt about you Duncan all night: how you were going off to live on a ranch in California because it was the only way to paint — & you were very bitter — didn't want ever to see me again.

The following conversation took place a few nights ago at Roger's:

R. "Vanessa really gets more & more amazing - I mean her character.

Clive: Yes. She's so-quite sublime.

V.W: Her natural pretty has greatly increased.

R: And then her painting. Sickert says he'd rather have her pictures of apples than a Chardin. She's gone

miles a head of any one.

Clive: "That picture is what one may call a diploma picture. It marks a stage.

V.W: That's the one I wanted to buy.

Roger: You can't now. For Lalla has bought it.

V.W. damned old Jewess!

Clive: But you know it's her character!

Roger: the greatness!

Clive: the originality!

VW: We've talked enough about Nessa — In fact there was much more in this loathsome strain. which I can't bring myself to write down. I said the truest thing though — about natural piety —

I suppose the whole of our week end has been told you in detail before now. There wasn't very much to tell. The worst of a week end on that scale is that one gets rather stupefied before it's over. I had a private talk with Ott; & on the whole I think that she has been slightly maligned. At least she was more vivacious & malicious & a less vapourish than I expected. She said that she was now happier than ever before,

though she had had many bitter disappointments in friendship; I couldn't understand why Lawrence — Murry & Katharine all turned against her. I said it was a form of inverted snobbishness; & she quoted long passages from Lés novel, & was very discreet about Katharine — in fact she was rather reserved, thinking most unjustly that I do sometimes let things out. There were endless young men from Oxford, — Brett & Lytton & Aldous Huxley who talks too much about his prose romances for my taste, & falls into deep gloom, when, according to Ott: he is thinking of Maria. I saw Frieszard, & we had a family gossip — all I remember just now is that Ermengarde has just become a Quaker. At last Friedgard was sending her a post card to ask if this was true. Gerald poured out his miseries to Leonard, & is secretly trying to get moved. They have a dismal little cottage. I thought. — the whole situation for both parties seemed to me intolerable. Brett is a queer imp. She took me to her studio & is evidently very proud of a great picture full of blue umbrellas, which seems to console her for being deaf. There was a poet called Evan Morgan, in black velvet with a scarlet ribbon & a muff: a twitching man called Earp: Philip

all gaitered a very well-meaning but I should fancy a dreary old deathshead in the long run.

I had my period 2 days ago & spent one morning reading old letters. Sadder to say yours beat the literary gents quite hollow. I was amused by your account of meeting "Barnes" at Florence in the year 1909. I must copy it for you.

"On our evening walk we met the Barnes'. I dislike her. In fact I came to the conclusion that the new generation of females is not a patch upon the old. They have the hardness of youth & the self-possession of age— a horrid mixture. They have none of that endearing gaucherie which you & I must have possessed in abundance. Adams, Meynell, Barnes, all are alike, but Barnes & Meynell, on account of their upbringing, are also aesthetic. On the whole I prefer the unaesthetic Adams, who might I think have been shaken out of her self-possession."

That pretty well does for Barnes!

Barbara is constantly bursting into my room for help in printing. She comes 3 days a week, & has lunch & tea, & has already told me that I am to tell her honestly if I ever want to be rid of her— & what is one to do?

Yrs B.

NYPL HAMILL 12/29/69

16 December 1917
? or 9 Dec

1918

Hogarth,
Sunday.

Dearest,
I enclose a sketch — in fact it's a word for word true — of Marny's conversation as a thank offering for the loan of your picture; & if you think it a fair exchange, we might do traffic on these lines. There was a great deal more of Marny, as you may suppose, since she spent 2½ hours here. She sent you her love & I told her you particularly wished me to give her yours, when I told you she was coming. This gave her immense pleasure; & I think you ought

to ask her to stop a lunch with you
next time she goes to Hastings.
We are now corresponding about
bread making.

I'm afraid the chances are
that I shan't be able to come
to your party — NYPL — my affairs
will probably choose that day.
The servants are already half
tipsy at the idea, & have planned
all sorts of assignations by
moonlight with Sid a Will.
Noel & can't get away, —
James wants to stay in London
to see her. so I think we
shall be alone for Christmas
itself — Then Ray is coming
for a few days — Ka I think —
Shall we meet at all?

Could you tell me of Julian

would like Scotts Tales of a Grandfather?
I've got an old copy which I could give
him — but I want to find a lighter
book too, but I don't know what.
Have you any photographs of father?
A man who is writing a book
on Meredith has written to
ask me for one, about 1870–9 —
I can't find any; but I suppose
Aunt Julia's is in existence —

I hear you took Widow Brereton.
Do take care what you say about
death. separation. divorce —
concubines — Be tactful — about
her children's faces; say nothing
about the Church. for you can't
be sure that she is an atheist
merely because her husband is a
Clergyman. I can see you
whisking your tail in her
mincemeat entrails — there
asking why the mind, seeing
he's dead — which he isn't —
course, or has that point

been established?

GB.

I'm not giving you a present.
I trust to your honour not to
give me one. (or merely a
passionate outburst of embrace)

NYPL

HAMILL 12/20/69

1917

SATURDAY, 8th Dec;---

Today, Saturday, we walked to Twickenham where L. took the train for Staines,and I got back late to find Marny waiting ~~her~~. I found her sitting bolt upright, away from the fire,as if she wouldnt encroach upon it, dressed in a sleek ~~black~~ coat of some fabricated fur; large muff; little bit of lace at her throat;thin gold chain; all infinitely decorous and after the pattern of the spinsters of breeding who buy their goods at Barkers,and wait to be served in Kensington Post Office,and are always kept waiting,and then become plaintive,but never angry. Her face is more than ever the face of the emaciated saint with a dash of the sheep,and the eyes of a child. So we greeted each other.

V.. Dear Marny, how nice to see you--after all these years!

M... O Goat dear,how charming to see you,and Ive been using up your lovely fire,for I caught my train,which one cant be sure of doing in these times;and I found my way up so beautifully. I'll take off my gloves but not my coat,and Ive such heaps of things to ask and to hear--

(and so we sat down to tea;and straightway lighted upon --(it didnt seem to matter where one lighted--) Florence Bishop.

M...O but you mustnt call her Bishop. Shes married a naval doctor and her names Burke. Yes,she still keeps up with

us,for we met in the street one day and she asked us to tea. She lives in a little flat in the Earls Court Road,for she's not at all well off,you know; I fancy old Mr Bishop was a foolish old man. But she gives you Tiptree jam for tea, and she looks like a picture. Such a pretty flat,and her white hair so becoming,and everything as nice as possible...But not as nice as this; no, Goat dear, no one ever has tea's likes your's. We havent had butter(this is butter isnt it?) for a long time, and sometimes we can't even get the nice kind of margarine;but I won't deal at Barkers,no I dont think its right to deal at Barkers, after the evidence at that dreadful fire-- I thought it gave one a dreadful idea of him. And we seem quite in the region for fires. Wright's coal shed burnt down behind us the other night--all that good coal wasted;it seemed such a pity,didnt it? and last winter we quite ran out of coal. It was a Saturday too, and I went from shop to shop begging --even a scuttlefull will take us over Sunday I said,but they hadnt got any,and who should I meet at Knightsbridge but Kitty Maxse? and she said, O I'll give you some coal; I've got two cellars full,and sure enough,though I begged her not to,that very afternoon up she drove in a taxi with a sack full,and that saw us through,but I've not seen her since that day,so distinguished looking and not a year older,though she must be going on for fifty. Why, I'm 55, and Toad 43--but one forgets peoples ages, and I'm sure I dont feel old, and you look like 25, and Nessa as lovely as ever I suppose! with those great blue eyes---

(here followed the whole history, very skillfully concocted by me, of the more reputable side of Nessa, Clive, Adrian, Duncan Bunny, and ourselves--also, the Shoves came in, and how Ermen-garde has turned Quaker, and probably has more in her than Fredegond, though she's not attractive, or beautiful in the family way--"Still, Goat dear, looks arent everything...")

M. ...Dear me, how we all move about, partly owing to the war to be sure; though I do manage to see some of my old frineds still, like Miss Harris; Nessa would remember her; she paints really remarkably well, but she wont exhibit, because she thinks she's not worthy, and she's given it up now, like most people, for war work. And Hilda Lightbody, I see her sometimes. Yes, she's a widow--oh, for years now, and Mr Lightbody was always a great invalid, and now she makes papier mache splints down in Westminster, and I believe we're going to tea with her next Wednesday. Yes, I keep up with Adeline; I'm not so naughty about the Fishers as you and Nessa are; and she hasnt changed at all--such lovely golden hair, not a white hair in her head, though she has this dreadful arthritis, and cant get out of her chair without a stick. She took Hervey to Hastings for a change, and theyve stayed on, for there wasnt any reason why they shouldnt stay on, and the lodgings suited them, and Hervey liked the air, and Millicent isnt very far off. Poor Millicent--she suffered terribly over poor John. It was the camp, bad drains we think--though no one knows, and he'd always meant to be a soldier anyhow, which makes it rather better perhaps...

And virginia milks cows at Lord Rayleighs place in Essex. She prefers horses,but she couldnt get horses,and shes very fond of cows. No, I dont think they'll ever leave Hastings, though Millicent would rather be in the real coutry or in the real town; but then they know people and she does a lot in a social way. Last winter she got up dances though she didnt feel like dancing I'm sure,but she thinks young people ought to have their gaities, in spite of this dreadful war. What a terrible tragedy it all is,Goat dear! And what dos Leonard think of it all? I suppose he cant say for certain when we shall have peace-- nobody seems able to tell one that. And the children grow up-- its quite wicked how they grow up, and Nessas children just the same I suppose, big boys, both of them, and I hope they look like her. Yes, Halford is quite a man,with a poetic side but very practical in other ways, I'm glad to say;and Janet so like Madge to look at,but I dont think she'll take to writing --but I wish you could make Madge write. Perhaps she'd be happier then,though I dont think anything could make Madge really happy;its not in the Symonds nature, though theyre such wonderful people in their way..and I was so glad to hear that Katharine has quarrelled with that odious Northcliffe. I'm told they never see each other now. And I do feel that he's at the bottom of all our troubles,though the Prussians seem to have acted in a very high handed way, I must say;but the fault cant be entirely with them as people make out. I believe the south Germans want peace just as much as we do...Yes, we had the raid the other night,and we went and sat in the

Wales' room on the ground floor. We all sat in the passage till it was over, and then we went to bed. And Toad had dropped off to sleep, when I heard a dreadful moaning noise, and I knew it couldnt be the raid, so I didnt wake her up. And then it came again, and I wondered whether it could ~~really~~ mean that the Germans wee actually there; so I put on my dressing gown, and looked out of the window and saw nothing, ~~and I thought it very odd,~~ and suddenly it sounded just bneath my windows, so I thought, "well, this time I will make sure, for if its any thing queer we oughtnt to be up in the roof like this", and I went out on to the staircase, and I met a lady dressed for walking and she said, O theres nothing to be frightened about, Thats the all clear Bugle" So I went back again, but I think the a uthorities ought to tell one, dont you?"

19 Dec
1917

Hogarth
Wednesday.

Dearest,

I think it would be a pity to put your party on to Saturday, as my affairs are quite undependable, anyhow it might pour. But leave it on Monday, & if I can & its tolerably fine I'll come to lunch & Leonard will come to tea & we'll go home afterwards.

I'm sending Quentins present addressed to you today, as its two lucky

to pack. We had a raid
last night — Bob was dining
with us & talked so loud
that we couldn't hear the
guns. But Saxon says it was
rather bad in London. We
ate most of our dinner in
the coal cellar.

NYPL

Yr B.

26 Dec 1917

Atcham.

Wednesday.

Dearest

I've found out that I can borrow a mattress from Mrs Affield. So that we shall have 2 beds free on Saturday, unless by any chance Ray, who's not come, should want to stay over Sunday. But I would send a wire if that were so.

If not, do bring

the children - wont you come
to lunch? Roger too, if
he's there.
I think we can manage
enough milk - you might
let me know what
meals they usually have.
It's quite ok right that
Barbara should go to you,
if she only tell the 10th.
Very melancholy how
life is deprived of by
periods.
Do come on Saturday
if you can.
Yr B

NYPL